Tribals Engaged in Salseeds and Tendu Leaves

4940. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of tribal men and women in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh engaged to collect salseeds, Tendu leaves, Mahua and other forest and forests products;

(b) whether there is any proposal to cover these tribal workers and employees under State insurance, provident fund, gratuity, pension and other social security schemes; and

(c) whether any special programme for the health care of these tribal workers and their families have been formulated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) The work of Tendu leaf, salseeds and Mahua collection is a seasonal work of informal nature for about 45 days in a year. The members of poor families residing adjacent to the forest areas engage themselves in collection of tendu leaf, salseeds and Mahua on a part time basis. As such no census of such workers has been carried out in the country. However, in some States the record of mandays generated is maintained. In the State of Madhya Pradesh a list of tendu leaf collectors between the age of 18 to 60 years has been prepared under the Group Insurance Scheme.

(b) and (c) Tendu leaf collectors are covered with insurance in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Gujarat State Forest Development Corporation has introduced a welfare scheme for compensation in the event of injury or death of the tendu leaf collector during working seasons. In some States some units are given to Tendu Labour Cooperative Societies on concessional rates. Maximum efforts are made to provide remunerative price to the tendu leaf collectors to safe guard against their exploitation by Private Traders. Health is State subject. The tribal workers avail of health care facilities provided through dispensaries/ hospitals set up by State Governments. As the persons engaged in the process of collection of Tendu leaf, salseeds and Mahua are mobile and not clearly identifiable, there is no proposal to extend the provisions of the ESI, EPF, Pension and Gratuity schemes to such workers.